

Serial No.: 09/539,405  
Examiner: Kading, Joshua A.

**In the claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A system for providing a feedback signal in a telecommunications network, comprising:

a plurality of bus control modules, each having a plurality of cards coupled thereto by a bus and operable to control the operation of the cards on the bus, and each further operable to receive feedback information from the cards coupled thereto and to generate a feedback signal based on the feedback information received;

a lower level distribution module, at a control level hierarchically above the bus control modules, and coupled to the bus control modules separately from the bus to distribute control to the bus control modules and to receive the feedback signal therefrom; and

a timing generator, at a control level hierarchically above the lower level distribution module, and coupled to the lower level distribution module, the lower level distribution module being coupled between the timing generator and the bus control modules, wherein the timing generator provides control to the lower level distribution module, and the lower level distribution module distributes the control to the bus control modules,

wherein the feedback signal generated by the bus control modules comprises a plurality of frames, and feedback information from each of the bus control modules and lower level distribution module is assigned to a specified one of the frames, and

a lower level distribution module coupled to the bus control modules, wherein the lower level distribution module is operable to receive the feedback signal from the bus control modules, and to insert feedback information for the lower level distribution module into the feedback signal; and

a timing generator coupled to the lower level distribution module, wherein the timing generator is operable to receive the feedback signal from the distribution module coupled thereto, and to provide the feedback signal to a controller for response.

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2. (Cancelled)

3. (currently amended) The system of Claim 1, further comprising an intermediate level distribution module coupled to the lower level distribution module and to the timing generator, the intermediate level distribution module being operable to receive the feedback signal from the lower level distribution module, and to insert feedback information for the intermediate level distribution module into the feedback signal, and then to provide the feedback signal to the timing generator.

4. (currently amended) The system of Claim 3, ~~wherein the feedback signal comprising a plurality of frames,~~ the intermediate level distribution module is operable to insert the feedback information into a specified frame of the feedback signal.

5. (currently amended) The system of Claim 3, further comprising an upper level distribution module coupled to the intermediate level distribution module and to the timing generator, the upper level distribution module being operable to receive the feedback signal from the intermediate level distribution module, and to insert feedback information for the upper level distribution module into the feedback signal, and then to provide the feedback signal to the timing generator.

6. (currently amended) The system of Claim 5, ~~wherein the feedback signal comprising a plurality of frames,~~ the upper level distribution module is operable to insert the feedback information into a specified frame of the feedback signal.

7. (currently amended) The system of Claim 1, ~~wherein the feedback signal comprising a plurality of frames,~~ each bus control module is operable to insert feedback information for the bus control module into a specified frame of the feedback signal.

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8. (currently amended) The system of Claim 1, ~~wherein the feedback signal comprising a plurality of frames;~~ the lower level distribution module is operable to insert the feedback information into a specified frame of the feedback signal.

9. (Original) The system of Claim 1, the feedback signal comprising an alarm signal.

10-22 (canceled)

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